

Bold and of Mary of Burgundy. There is besides a profusion of works of art in painting and sculpture; among the latter a group of the Virgin and Child in marble, attributed to Michelangelo, and certainly bearing the impress of his masterly hand. Externally the church is distinguished by an uncouth spire rising to the height of 442 feet. There were formerly four turrets at the angles of the square part, but being out of repair, they were demolished in 1760, and this has occasioned the singularly naked appearance given to a tower and spire of such enormous altitude.

THE ARCHITECTURE OF THE DAY.*

Now some of our celebrated buildings exhibit qualities the very reverse of all these:—At Eton Hall, the buttresses on the exterior, two between each window, in some parts, having no reference to anything within, are useless and unmeaning, and perhaps worse than useless, even if beauty were independent of truth, for these omissions might have led to something unique. I should like sometimes to see a row of fine tracery windows without the somewhat rude interruption of the buttress, the absence of which, I think, would cause some pictorial qualities to be developed that would excite our admiration. Buttresses, it should be remembered, have not the softness, the light-and-shadow qualities, which distinguish the column and unite it to the front: they have the advantage of giving a bold and decided shadow, but for lightness and elegance cannot compare with the latter: placed between every window, they in some measure interfere with unity: the window is, from any good point of view, visually mutilated, and in extreme views, and where there is a great projection of buttress, lost altogether. It is true that, toward the summit, where the buttress frequently ends in a slender turret, or is discontinued, the surface of the wall becomes again united; but the union is a slight one, and the injury to the view of the window is considerable. Now beauty or novelty must be sacrificed where they interfere with constructive requirements, but in many instances the buttress is clung to where it is useless, and where the omission of it would at least produce something more unique. Of the effect of a row of beautiful florid or perpendicular windows, in full style of decoration, and without buttresses, we can scarcely judge; but I have no doubt it would be fine: I have noticed that where the windows are very broad, consisting of many lights, and the buttresses, consequently, few and far between, the effect is very rich and elegant. But whatever the result, I would say, leave out the false buttress, and trust to truth and the inherent power of the style, to produce sufficient effect with those parts and features which are constructively essential.

The building I have just referred to gives false ideas of its construction; but there are those that convey erroneous notions of their character and use. Some country seats (which, fortunately, are not increasing in number) have, with their boldly decorated windows, in conjunction with lofty six or eight columned porticoes, embracing the whole height of the building, more of the appearance of public buildings than private residences,—a thing that ought to be sedulously avoided, even in the largest mansions, on which the character of private and domestic should be written as legibly as on the cottage. There is, perhaps, nothing that distinguishes a building as public or private more than the style of its entrance: a large and lofty portal seems to invite a multitude, and is characteristic of a public edifice: small ones, on the contrary, express the domestic, though a good breadth of door is not a bad symbol of hospitality. This is a point, however, on which the architect may be overruled. Some wealthy parvenu, dreaming, with Lord Bacon, of "feast and triumphs," may, in his anxiety to show "a side for the banquet," persist in forgetting the domestic every-day purposes of his inharmomious and conventional abode.

Before concluding these more particular allusions, I would make a remark on what is perhaps the most interesting feature of our

ecclesiastical structures—the steeple. A spire will not look well, and should not be placed, above a circular peristyle of pure Greek columns, surmounting, as it were, a peripteral temple, as is the case in some of our churches. It is like crowning with a spire the monument of Lysicrates or the Temple of Vesta at Tivoli. The spire is a feature essentially Gothic, and, therefore, before it can be used along with classic orders, the latter must undergo some adaptation,—there must be an infusion of the vertical principle to make them harmonize with the spire, which should be small, and light in appearance, not too conspicuous in the design, as it is not, and cannot be, quite at home in a classic building. This is done, except perhaps as regards proportion, by Gibbs in the church of St. Martin's-in-the-fields, and by Wren in some of his, where the columns are attached, and the entablature is broken over each, as a preparation for the surmounting spire, and a beautiful whole is produced. St. George's Church, Dublin, is also a good example of this adaptation. The Italian manner of grouping columns, by which rich results were obtained, as at the Duomo of Syracuse, might suggest something on this head. But the principles on which the Italians produced their beautiful groups and compositions have not been fully investigated by English artists and illustrated in this country.

The want of beauty in many Gothic steeples of late erection arises, I suspect, from a mistake as to the medium through which beauty is obtained in such structures. An impression seems to prevail, that, if the requirements of construction be truly observed, all will be right; but beauty is not altogether dependent upon these; it must be an object of design: neither essential parts, nor needful strength, must be sacrificed to the spirit of decoration, but construction must be modified by regard to abstract beauty. Many unsightly edifices have been the result of error on this point, and many beautiful forms have been excluded.

It is strange that so little hint has been taken from the town and lantern of St. Nicholas, of Liverpool, and those of its namesake of Newcastle. They are among the most beautiful stone-embodied visions in the kingdom. The former, more substantial in construction than the latter, and less liable to the charge of "fantastic," is, indeed, a most elegant object. Its perforations give it a truly aerial character, a fairy-like airiness of effect, highly becoming in such objects, which, being seen from so many points, call loudly for decoration; while their elevated and insular situation demands lightness,—and perhaps nothing more suitable for thus invading the blue sky, and reposing in the regions of the air, could be imagined. Some fine steeples have lately been erected in the neighbourhood, but there are those against which complaint has justly been made. Among the objects that, by rising above the roofs of the town, are more constantly courting our observation, our tall chimney-shafts are, to me, not the least pleasing; some of them, elegant in form, graceful in outline, may at least enter the lists in rivalry with the steeples. Sufficiently simple, and certainly not calling for much invention, they are nevertheless, from the geometrical properties of their form and section, necessarily beautiful.

The failure of beauty in steeples, I fear, may owe its origin not only to the cause I have mentioned, but also to too servile a spirit of imitation of ancient forms; and this spirit is certainly manifested in the appropriation of Gothic details generally. On this head, I would observe, we should not imitate or appropriate anything that is evidently the result of imperfect or infantine art. In adopting some early style we should take only the principle of design and execution, but give to the detail the benefit of the present advanced state of both. Now, many of the details of modern Norman churches are slavish copies of what was not worth copying, and are quite indefensible on any other grounds. Many of the decorations of the early styles of Gothic are not more deserving of our imitation in the present day. We admire the principles of design and laws of construction of the mediæval edifices, but, among the multitudes of ornaments used in them, many are of a barbarous character, offensive to pure taste, and such as must grate upon genuine artistic feeling. They may, in the old building, mellowed by the hand of

time, look well enough, but are not fit to meet the light in edifices of the nineteenth century. What I wish chiefly to observe is, that nothing should be used now simply because it has been used. Antiquity will not atone for the want of beauty. If we cannot discern something abstractedly good in it, or harmonious in its relations, we should reject it. We may—we must—have a high idea of the taste and genius that designed the cathedrals of York and Lincoln, and admire the scientific and mechanical skill that triumphed in their construction; but that is not a sufficient reason for using any particular ornament of these structures. We cannot take its beauty upon trust.

As to the lack of originality generally, I trust it is now unnecessary to say much on the subject. Without originality, we cannot have real beauty. Nor can a perfect building be made up of fragments, however beautiful each part may be in itself, or perfect the whole from which it was severed,—I mean, by merely bringing beautiful parts together in a new combination,—but such parts may be so modified and moulded, by the fusing, plastic hand of genius, as perfectly to amalgamate. Genius adopts as well as creates; but it irradiates all that it touches: a great portion of the lines of Shakespeare were adopted from preceding poets; but they are so united in each poem as to form one perfect whole. The main charm in any building, as in a poem or literary composition, must be in its entirety; and when this complete unity exists—that concord and harmony which may be seen in nature, and which it is the aim and triumph of art to obtain,—no imaginable alteration could be made, no addition or division, without disturbing that spirit of beauty which is recumbent there, and which such compositions must ever enshrine.

This originality of design requires not the discovery of a new style: invention could not supply a better basis for design than the elements we have, nor so good. The poet looks out for some legend or groundwork in history which may serve as a body for his poem, and into which his imagination is to breathe life and beauty. Why deny the architect an equal privilege? It is known and acknowledged that tradition supplies a better fable for a poem than any invention can, and the principle holds good in architecture.

What has been said about choosing a style, and confining our design and practice to that style, is entitled to some attention. Certainly our practice of styles wants limiting. We need no Chinese, Egyptian, Indian, or Turkish, as distinct styles. We must not, if we would avoid the ridicule of enlightened criticism, exhibit within the compass of a few square miles the architecture of different zones of the globe. Let us examine them, extract a principle, catch an idea from them, and dismiss them. Of the two styles, or classes of style, viz., the pointed and the antique, I do not see that we can dispense with either. Each expresses ideas which the other could not so well express. The horizontal principle of the one endears it most to sublimity feelings, and the antique is therefore best adapted for the expression of earthly purposes, for symbolizing terrestrial power and magnificence; while the vertical principle of the Gothic, pointing beyond time and space, marks it as the appropriate expression of celestial aspiring and trust. Madame De Staël calls the cathedral of Milan "a beautiful image of grief towering above the gay and opulent city,—a silent image of that mystery of infinity which we feel within us." It is true we have sought to infuse the Gothic principle into classic architecture, and even its most characteristic feature, the spire, has been adopted into its family, but whatever our success in this, they are indigenous to the Gothic. There, emphatically,

"Hope had her spire—
Star high, and pointing still to something higher."

Beauty is the leading trait of the former—sublimity of the latter.

As to the comparative value of styles, I should say, the one that would embrace for its ornamentation the widest range of animal and of vegetable creation, as admitting most variety—richness—and that would be capable of adapting—of fully subduing—them to its use, would be the best for our purpose. I do not see that either the classic or Gothic is